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ABSTRACT

This paper directs itself primarily to an examination of the relationship between educational opportunity and the overall organization of higher education. The first part of this paper is concerned with the current meaning of educational opportunity and the major issues involved in its implementation. These are: (1) the functions of higher education; (2) universal access or universal attendance; (3) the nature of the curriculum; (4) local versus regional colleges; (4) autonomy versus control; (5) who will pay; and (6) what access criteria should be used. The second part deals with some of the findings of a national study on the extent to which higher education is accessible to various populations. This study was based on a demographic analysis of all 2600 recognized institutions in the US, and its findings indicated that about 3 in 10 were free access institutions, i.e., relatively inexpensive, admitted the majority of high school graduates, and presented no geographical or psychological barrier. Free access education was almost exclusively public, constituting 60% of the public sector and 1% of the private sector. The last part describes the organization of accessible higher education in various states, particularly as it bears upon the major issues outlined. (AF)

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Educational Opportunity and The Organization of Higher Education

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Throughout this century progressively larger proportions of the age group have continued education beyond high school. But in the convulsive 1960's enrollment more than doubled and college attendance became the statistical norm for the first time.[1] Access to higher education is increasingly associated with social and economic opportunity in the public mind, and partly for that reason, there is also an urgent effort to achieve a more proportionate enrollment of minority/poor youth in higher education. These rising expectations have tended to support the attitude that higher education is a right, not a privilege.

The implications of such public expectations are exceedingly complex and often controversial. There has been more than usual attention to such matters as: Who goes to college? (Folger and Nam, 1967); What are the barriers? (Ferrin, 1970); Does education actually yield social opportunity? (Jencks, 1968); What programs can help to improve educational opportunity? (Carnegie Commission, 1970). A collection of recent papers has explored in some detail the resources required for greatly broadened postsecondary education (U.S. Office of Education, 1970). In contrast, the papers of this

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[1] According to the latest information available, the ratio of first-time college students to 18-year olds is .53; the corresponding figure a decade earlier was .36. (Opening Fall Enrollment, 1958, 1968; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970).

conference are especially relevant to the role of the institution, particularly the relationship of its policies and practices to expanding educational opportunity.

These policies and practices exist in a larger framework--the overall organization of higher education. What is the relationship between opportunity and organization? That is the basic question to which this paper is addressed. We begin by assuming that the conditions of educational opportunity are imbedded in legislation, master plans, and facilities, in organizational relationships and programs, and in the collective policies and practices--all institutionalized in an overall system widely understood to be variegated and complex if not incomprehensible.

It is hardly possible to discuss the organization of higher education without giving due attention to its basic nature and function. This is especially true since the intersection of opportunity and organization is fundamentally a social and political matter which touches all significant aspects of the educational process. In very limited space any discussion of these matters is likely to be superficial; nonetheless some context is necessary in order to gain full benefit from subsequent descriptive material.

Consequently, this paper comes in three pieces. The first is concerned with the current meaning of educational opportunity and major issues involved in its implementation. The second reports briefly some findings from a national study of the extent to which higher education is accessible to various populations. Finally, we shall draw upon this information in describing the organization of

accessible higher education in various states, particularly as it bears upon the major issues outlined.

What Does Opportunity Mean?

Coleman (1969) notes that the idea of educational opportunity is evolutionary; through time it has tended to take on additional characteristics so that the concept is broadened. A single inexpensive, non-selective university in a state was once regarded as an advanced egalitarian expression of equal opportunity. A recent statement by the Carnegie Commission (1970) captures well a more current interpretation. It states, "The transcendent goal is that inequality in one generation should not, inevitably, be a legacy of succeeding generations." Income, ethnic group, geographic location, age, and quality of early schooling were cited as examples of characteristics or conditions which presently discriminate the education opportunity of individuals. (Interestingly, sex was not included.)

There seem to be three principal assumptions underlying this statement and similar ones issued by earlier commissions (Eisenhower Commission, 1960; Educational Policy Commission, 1964). First, no artificial barriers such as money or geography should inhibit educational aspiration. The question of what is artificial will likely be debated and redefined continuously. Second, the rate of access to college should not show pronounced discrepancies on common social indicators, e.g., race, class, etc. Third, there is the implication of public responsibility to identify and alleviate barriers to universal access--how otherwise can generational inertia be overcome?

Currently, the problem of opportunity for higher education is discussed in several overlapping frames of reference. One is the question of minority representation and what must be done to solve the social problems related to it. Another is the role of selective institutions--more specifically, how they will select their students and how they will define their function. A third and more general question is how useful educational opportunity can be extended to a larger segment of high school graduates and the adult population.

A comparison may help to illustrate how these frames of reference differ. Throughout the country there are some 500 colleges selective enough to require at least a B high school average for admission (Willingham, 1970a). These colleges enroll almost 500,000 freshmen. If all of these institutions were to admit a random group of high school graduates, they would presumably enroll 250,000 students who ranked in the lower half of their high school class on any conventional measure of academic accomplishment. But there are now about 3.0 million high school graduates each year (U.S. Office of Education, 1968) or 1.5 million who rank in the lower half. Even in this limiting case only one out of six lower-half students could possibly attend one of these (formerly) selective institutions. Thus, the problem of educational opportunity is far broader than the important matter of appropriate representation of minority/poor youth in the selective institution.

The point is not to understate either the current policy problems of selective institutions or the need to redress social imbalances, but to recognize these issues in the larger context. This

paper is concerned with the broader interpretation of the problem primarily because it is difficult to discuss the relationship between opportunity and organization in any more narrow connection. Secondarily, information relevant to any of these problems is scarce, but it is possible to present some new data which bear upon the general matter of the accessibility of higher education and its organizational implications.

There are a number of exceedingly complex issues involved, and it should be obvious that the organization of higher education is only one aspect of those factors that influence individual opportunity in society. There is also the compelling influence of individual condition, social circumstance, and prior education. Furthermore, the ultimate issue is the distribution of privilege--probably less determined by education than by political power, economic realities, job opportunities, generalized racism, and various forms of social exploitation and bigotry.

From a completely different point of view, we recognize that the development of real opportunity lies in the educational process of teaching and learning. The usable products of this process are confidence and competence, intellectual growth, and coping skill. Nonetheless access and certification are critical, and these plus the educational process are much dependent upon structures, planning, and policies; i.e., organization. What are the major issues involved in organizing higher education for the purpose of expanding opportunity? The following paragraphs describe seven.

Major Issues

The Functions of Higher Education

Much of the uncertainty and controversy concerning expanded postsecondary education stems from fundamental disagreement regarding the priorities and (limited) resources that are to be applied to different functions of higher education. Often disagreements are all the more ambiguous because the functions go unstated. Furthermore, the various functions which higher education does perform can be slanted toward either a traditional scholastic or an expanded societal interpretation.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to do justice to so broad an issue as the functions of higher education; it is nonetheless useful to provide a few examples. Figure 1 lists six functions and gives an illustrative scholastic interpretation of each plus an indication of what might be added under a broader societal interpretation. The scholastic model is familiar enough, even if sketchily outlined. It represents a traditional way of viewing postsecondary education, though there are various rather different manifestations such as the small liberal arts college or the research oriented university.

The expanded societal model adds features which have two general characteristics: An orientation toward people and service, and the inclusion of a much broader spectrum of society. In general the expansion of educational opportunity is associated with the societal interpretation and increasing enrollment tends to force higher edu-

Figure 1

Illustrations of a Scholastic as Opposed to a Societal Interpretation of Various Functions of Higher Education

Functions of Higher Education	Objectives Under A Scholastic Interpretation	Additional Objectives Under A Societal Interpretation
Transmission of Culture	Preserve the western heritage	Enhance subculture identity
Individual Development	Transmit middle class morals and manners	Aid career development and social coping for most high school graduates and adults
Occupational Training	Train professionals	Retrain and develop work-study ties at many occupational levels
Generation of Knowledge	Develop the arts, sciences, and professions	Apply knowledge to social problems
Community Service	Provide extension services (e.g., agriculture and engineering)	Promote public service, support community action
Provide A National Resource	Develop and maintain a specialized manpower pool	Absorb social pressure, e.g., reintegration of servicemen, broaden social opportunity

cation in this direction. The issue is what priority shall be applied to frequently divergent objectives such as those indicated in Figure 1.

Universal Access or Universal Attendance

A closely related issue is the proportion of the population which higher education attempts to serve directly. The Carnegie Commission (1970) makes a point of distinguishing universal access and universal attendance, saying:

> We do not believe that each young person should of necessity attend college. Quite the contrary. Many do not want and will not want to attend, and it cannot be shown that all young persons will benefit sufficiently from attendance to justify their time and the expense involved...We favor, on the other hand, universal access for those who want to enter institutions of higher education, are able to make reasonable progress after enrollment, and can benefit from attendance.

The distinction is valid and critical--regretably, it is probably also incompatible with the Commission's "transcendent goal" of preventing the passing of inequality from generation to generation. It is increasingly recognized that large numbers of students both in and out of college simply have very little interest in the intellectual pursuits commonly reflected in higher education. The problem lies in the fact that many of these are the students who "inherit" unequal opportunity (Jaffe and Adams, 1969; Knoell, 1966). Therefore, efforts to equalize educational opportunity are frequently based upon the assumption that higher education cannot lie passively in academic orthodoxy, but must add programs and living conditions that meet the needs

and suit the life styles of students who might otherwise find little reason to continue their education beyond high school. Thus, to minimize motivational and cultural barriers and to work effectively toward universal access is often to encourage universal attendance whether that is the intention or not.

The development of effective compromises between universal access and universal attendance is likely to be one of the more important and difficult problems in the organization of higher education over the next decade. One possible solution lies in the differentiation of institutions and programs. Another is the systematic development of attractive alternatives to college. But it is important to bear in mind that voluntary expression of different values and habits of various subcultures will surely result in different rates of college enrollment. Thus strict proportionate representation in higher education serves neither public nor individual interest, and who can easily tell when measures to insure universal access will, in fact, promote universal attendance?

There is here an obvious parallel to the development of compulsory attendance at the secondary level. Presumably we will never come to explicit attendance requirements at the college level, but certainly some of the problems generated by compulsory attendance in high school will find similar expression in high rates of college attendance. The parallel seems close enough to suggest the need for a detailed examination by thoughtful educators.

The Content of Higher Education

The nature of the curriculum is obviously one of the critical issues in organizing higher education in order to expand opportunity. It is also far too complex to allow more than brief mention of a few general considerations. We start with the well-known fact that the content of higher education is now widely criticized on various grounds including an abstract discipline orientation, a lack of social involvement, inadequate personal relevance, and disinterest in the development of the student. (See Axelrod et al., 1969; Katz, et al., 1968; Mayhew, 1969; Willingham, 1970b). These problems form the backdrop.

Figure 1 suggests that rather different content is implied by a societal interpretation of higher education. New types of students not only require diverse subject matter but new styles, operating procedures, administrative arrangements, relationships with the surrounding community and the business world, and probably rather diverse working assumptions concerning the expected outcomes of the educational process. We would expect further diversity in the programs and institutions that are organized to serve different students and different needs under widely varying conditions. The problem is not merely to provide learning arrangements congenial to various minorities and subcultures; it is also necessary to maintain the functional integrity of the institution while insuring that there is real social and economic utility in the educational outcome.

The economic value of higher education has only recently been subjected to systematic analysis. Available data are typically crude,

and many writers have commented upon the complex relationship between education and work. In a scholarly and dispassionate study, Becker (1964) concluded that even with ability controlled the rate of economic return to the average college entrant is substantial. In a less convincing but provocative analysis, Berg (1970) argues that the training value of education is oversold.

The highly regarded New Careers movement (Riessman and Popper, 1968) assumes that economic opportunity is inescapably linked to education but that radically new forms of organization are necessary in order to improve the training value of education and its direct connection to job opportunity. The basic idea of New Careers is to provide the undereducated poor with an immediate job in the framework of a career ladder, each step of which is associated with specific training and supplementary formal education. The model emphasizes community centered service careers.

These considerations suggest one organizational implication in particular. That is the desirability of extending opportunity through imbedding institutions in the culture, the commerce, and the unique life of the local community.

Local Versus Regional Colleges

In the scholastic tradition, college is something you go away to. There are many well-known and obvious advantages to geographically centralized higher education. Concentration of resources facilitates efficiency. It also provides the critical mass necessary for academic scholarship. It is probably easier to add to existing colleges than to build new ones, particularly if the campus is located

in a socially detached and esthetically pleasant environment. And there is the legitimate argument that the socialization of young adults is furthered by their leaving home at age 18. These considerations provide counterpoint to arguments favoring local institutions.

Perhaps the dominant consideration is money. Whether the local college is actually cheaper than regional higher education in the broadest possible sense of national economy is an uncertain point. But in the reality of current conditions and legislative habits, the local two-year college is an inexpensive way to extend educational opportunity. It is also relatively inexpensive for the student for a number of obvious reasons. Thus, the alternative of local colleges mostly supported by local taxes is particularly attractive in lean fiscal periods such as the present.

Under a societal interpretation of the functions of higher education, there are many additional considerations. One set of issues concerns the relationship between proximity and opportunity. In the case of many youth to whom equal opportunity would be directed, college is a foreign experience, distant with respect to culture as well as geography. It is becoming increasingly recognized that the strangeness of middle class institutions and their uncertain practical relevance to immediate problems of marginal students are major barriers to higher education for the minority/poor (Knoell, 1970). It seems reasonable to assume that a local institution can reduce this psychological distance in ways which would be difficult or impossible for a regional college to accomplish. Added to these sociocultural ad-

vantages of the local college is the fact that the student can live at home, work part-time, and attend classes under circumstances which only commuting status permits.

There is some empirical evidence that these assumptions are valid. Several studies over the past 25 years have indicated that the attractive pull of a college dissipates rapidly with distance, and that the college access rate of local high school graduates is substantially higher in communities that have an inexpensive, nonselective college as compared with those that do not have such a college (See Willingham, 1970a).

Another set of issues stems from the expanding functions of higher education. Returning again to Figure 1, the societal emphasis is upon such locally oriented objectives as enhancing subculture identity, direct work-study ties, continuing education, community action, and application of knowledge to real social problems. One can hardly say that such objectives are warmly and uniformly embraced by higher education; they reflect, however, the insurrection of youth, the expectations of the excluded, and very likely the necessities of the future. Again, the major challenge is to create an organizational structure which will compromise the choice between local and regional institutions and develop the complementary objectives and potential of each.

Autonomy Versus Control

If equal opportunity means that no segment of society be grossly and unreasonably underrepresented in higher education, and if these goals are other than mere words, then it seems very likely that coor-

dinated public action is required. Kirp (1969) discusses equal educational opportunity as a corollary of recent constitutional interpretations involving criminal process and sufferage--both, like education, bearing upon fundamental individual rights due equal protection under the law. He quotes Fortas, saying:

> "The significance of the [criminal process] cases in terms of our national philosophy, goes beyond the criminal law. Apart from their specific meaning...they stand for the proposition that the state may be obligated in some situations to bridge the gap which indigency has created between a person and his constitutional rights. They represent a refusal to accept the fact of poverty as relieving the state from an affirmative duty to assure that all persons have access to constitutional rights. They request the state to do whatever is necessary, even if it means spending state funds, to make constitutional rights a living reality for everyone."

Kirp goes on to argue that the state has a vastly greater responsibility regarding equality of educational opportunity than it presently accepts. From the forgoing considerations, this responsibility would certainly include monitoring the real conditions of educational opportunity, planning the means whereby opportunity is fostered, developing public support for necessary programs, and coordinating programs in the individual and public interest.

Statewide planning and coordination has developed markedly over the past decade (Mayhew, 1968; Palola et al., 1970), as has the complementary technology represented by cost-benefit accounting procedures and management information systems (WICHE, 1969). There is, however, the unpromising possibility that these developments are outrunning the

social and educational philosophies they supposedly serve. For up to now relatively little attention has been given to such questions as: What types of data are necessary to monitor the protection of basic rights? What forms of coordination further what forms of opportunity? In what ways does state planning stifle or encourage local initiative?

A fundamental problem lies in the fact that a guarantee of equal opportunity requires central control and planning, but at the same time, effective opportunity seems very much dependent upon the local initiative and commitment which autonomy allows. In the possibility of independent action lies the main incentive for institutions and their units to create relevant programs, to develop new entanglements with the business and cultural environment, and to put message ahead of medium.

Who Will Pay?

It is clear enough that a substantial expansion and equalization of opportunity for higher education will cost a vast amount of money--money to support students unable to pay, money for additional facilities, and money for far more intensive programs at all age levels. This particular paper is not intended even to introduce the intricacies of financing higher education, but it must be at least recognized that the topic bears a decisive relationship to how higher education is organized and the opportunity it provides. Suffice it to cite three questions.

First, to what extent will higher education be supported by direct payment of student fees as opposed to indirect support of insti-

tutions? The former is assumed to put the burden where it belongs and to facilitate consumer satisfaction. Witnessing the commercial activities of some proprietary institutions leads some educators to question those assumptions. It is also argued, too often without convincing evidence, that educational opportunity in the public interest is best organized and planned rather than left to the vagaries of consumer demand.

Second, what sources of public support--local, state, and federal--will facilitate the most effective organization of higher education? It is generally presumed that the only large source of funds is federal revenue funneled through state agencies, yet this arrangement can further undermine indispensible community and institutional autonomy. How, for example, can higher education be so organized that a power elite in the state does not make decisions regarding allocation of resources to meet its own perception of need at the expense of powerless elements of society?

Third, how will aid be packaged nationally to students in different economic circumstances? The extent to which aid is made available as grants, loans, or work, and the conditions under which it is awarded may have as much bearing upon access to college as the availability of aid per se. From legislation to individual aid decisions, there are many opportunities for financial aid to miss those who need it most.

What Access Criteria?

The issue of access criteria is mainly the question of who will have access to what institutions and programs? The question requires

no introduction; this conference will doubtless elaborate it in some detail. There are, however, a number of vital national interests to be considered. For example:

- -to create genuine opportunity for fulfillment of diverse individual interests and abilities
- -to encourage diversity among institutions
- -to maximize the utilization of high level talent
- -to maintain the sorting and striving process which feeds aspiration and rewards accomplishment
- -to maintain systems of evaluation and certification which are individually fair and socially useful
- -to rectify serious imbalances in social opportunity

Many criteria determine the conditions of access to college. They include the personal and academic attributes of students, the policies and practices of institutions, the background characteristics which fix the course of secondary education and the student's motivation to continue, and such ancillary restraints as the cost of college and the lack of relevant programs where students need them. Naturally, these take on very different priorities depending upon what aspect of the total problem one is concerned with. For the remainder of this paper we shall focus upon some relatively simple institutional variables which permit estimates of the present degree of accessibility of higher education throughout the country. This discussion emphasizes system or statewide organization. Special admission programs and open-door divisions of selective institutions represent ways in which access is being organized at the institutional level.

Accessibility of U.S. Colleges

The forgoing discussion of major issues elaborates the obvious conclusion that educational opportunity is connected in innumerable complex ways to the organization of higher education. A primary question is the extent to which colleges are now accessible and what populations they serve? The data to be reported are based upon a demographic analysis of all 2600 recognized colleges in the United States.[2] The basic question is how many and what sort of people live within commuting distance of an accessible institution? This is clearly a very incomplete view of educational opportunity, but the procedure provides national baseline data which tell us something about the relationship between the organization of higher education and the issues previously outlined.

In this study free-access higher education was defined to include three characteristics: It must be relatively inexpensive so that cost does not arbitrarily exclude those who cannot pay or are unwilling to burden an uncertain future with a long-term debt; it must be willing to admit the majority of high school graduates; and it must exist in such proximity that neither geographical nor psychological distance constitutes a major barrier.

In order to incorporate these three characteristics, each college in the country was rated on a five-point scale based jointly

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[2] A detailed report of this study including an analysis of the accessibility of higher education in each of the 50 states is scheduled for Fall 1970 publication by the College Board under the title, Free-Access Higher Education.

upon tuition and selectivity. For the purposes of this analysis the two lowest levels were designated "free-access" colleges. Of some 2600 colleges, 789 or about three in ten were free-access as of Fall 1968. In practical terms this means that they charged no more than $400 in annual tuition, and at least one-third of their freshman class ranked in the bottom half at high school graduation. This criterion of selectivity was chosen because a number of institutions are ostensibly open-door but de facto selective.

Of those colleges which were not free-access, 500 were excluded because they are special purpose or heavily religious; the remaining 1300 or so institutions were inaccessible in roughly equal measure due to cost or selectivity--but more often both. Free-access higher education, as here defined, is almost exclusively public. It constitutes 60 percent of the public and 1 percent of the private sector. Accessible higher education is also very heavily represented by two-year colleges which constitute three-quarters of the total free-access group. Three out of ten public senior institutions are free-access; the same proportion holds for their branches.

The 789 free-access colleges were plotted on detailed maps with commuting perimeters around each. On the basis of results of prior studies and various rules of thumb used by state planning agencies, a one-way commuting guideline or 45 minutes was used in this study. This time interval was translated into commuting radii which ranged from 2 1/2 miles in the largest cities to 25 miles in small towns or rural areas.

The National Picture

It turns out that 42 percent of the population lives within these commuting areas. In a sense it is remarkable that the country has developed accessible higher education to this extent. On the other hand, educational opportunity for three-fifths of the population is inhibited by the simple fact that they do not happen to live near an accessible college. This is one of the less complicated indices of how far the country has to go in equalizing educational opportunity.

There are systematic differences in the proportion of people living near free-access colleges in different types of communities. As Table 1 shows, a small metropolitan area is the most favorable location for a poor, marginal student to find accessible higher education. It is largely unavoidable that students in sparsely populated areas are less likely to live near an accessible college. On the other hand, the orderly differences in accessibility among different-sized metropolitan areas make little sense. Metropolitan areas of one-half million or more appear frequently shortchanged when it comes to accessible higher education.

Of the 29 metropolitan areas that have a population of more than one million, Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Detroit, and Paterson-Clifton-Passaic did not have one free-access college located within their city limits as of Fall 1968. In 17 additional metropolitan areas, less than one-third of the central city or fringe population lives within commuting distance of a free-access college. Thus 23 of the 29 largest cities of the country have a major deficiency in the accessibility of higher education. Equally disturbing is the number

of metropolitan areas that have no free-access college at all. As of 1968, the Census Bureau defined 228 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, most of which had a population of 100,000 or greater. In 102 metropolitan areas the principal city has no free-access colleges.

Table 1 also indicates that blacks are somewhat more likely than whites to live near a free-access college in all types of communities except the fringes of the largest cities (where they are least numerous). Mexican Americans (in the five Southwestern states) and Puerto Ricans (in New York City and Chicago) are also somewhat more likely to live near an accessible college than are whites.

While it is also true that the overall analysis indicated no marked regional variations in the percentage of blacks living near free-access colleges, there are some very important exceptions and qualifications. First, there are states and metropolitan areas where these generalizations do not hold. In California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and New York, substantially fewer blacks than whites live near accessible institutions. The same is true in the metropolitan areas of Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, and Los Angeles. On the other hand, there are states and metropolitan areas where blacks are much more likely than whites to live within commuting distance of a free-access college. The best statewide examples are Missouri, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; a similar trend exists in Kansa City, Milwaukee, and Newark.

Another general exception to the data on minority groups cited inTable 1 is the problem of discrimination. This is another form of selectivity that can make an institution inaccessible just as surely

Table 1

Percentage of Different Populations Within Commuting Distance of a Free-Access College in the Fifty States

Area	Total Population (millions)	Percent Within Commuting Distance			
		White	Black	Mexican-Amer.[2]	All U. S.
Metropolitan Areas (SMSA)[1]					
1,000,000+					
Central Cities	32.6	36	42	42	38
Fringe	33.2	37	31	68	37
500,000 to 1,000,000	20.0	36	46	66	38
250,000 to 500,000	16.0	47	61	37	48
50,000 to 250,000	16.2	62	70	56	63
Counties Not in SMSA's					
Over 20,000	45.0	48	52	42	48
Under 20,000	16.2	24	27	13	24
All U. S.	179.3	42	47	47	42

1. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area

2. Mexican-American in five Southwestern states; also includes Puerto Ricans in New York City and Chicago.

as can cost or academic requirements. Through much of the country one must simply introduce a subjective "correction" for the obvious fact that much of higher education is, for many reasons, less accessible to blacks and other sociocultural minorities than to middle-class whites.

Regional Variations

The accessibility of higher education varies markedly among the four main census regions of the country but not always in expected ways. The Northeast, for example, has never been a region known for accessible colleges. Private education has been dominant to such an extent that some states--particularly New York and more recently Pennsylvania--have purposefully allocated substantial student aid resources in order to use the private sector for public purposes. Furthermore, the Northeast has been slow to develop the egalitarian interpretations of higher education represented by the community college and comprehensive postsecondary educational opportunity.

Despite these facts the Northeast is only slightly below the national average with respect to the proportion of people living within commuting distance of a free-access college. As Table 2 indicates, this region falls behind the South and West only in metropolitan areas of one-half million or more people. However, such areas contain two-thirds of the population in the Northeast. In addition to its urban problem, the Northeast has frequently not developed and supported its free-access institutions; public higher education in the region often receives niggardly appropriations (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1969).

Table 2

Percentage of the Population Within Commuting Distance of a Free-Access College in Different Types of Communities for Each Region

Area	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Metropolitan Areas (SMSA)				
1,000,000+				
Central Cities	29	44	38	44
Fringe	27	30	38	62
500,000 to 1,000,000	38	12	53	55
250,000 to 500,000	49	39	53	48
50,000 to 250,000	71	47	71	61
Counties Not in SMSA's				
Over 20,000	51	35	55	50
Under 20,000	24	23	28	17
Overall Percentage for Each Region	38	33	50	51

The Midwest is the surprise of the four regions. Its state institutions, long a source of national pride, have been identified historically with inexpensive, nonselective admissions. The data of Table 2 seem inconsistent with this tradition. The proportion of people living near an accessible college is substantially lower in the Midwest than in other regions. The largest cities appear better off than the Midwest generally; the principal reason is the existence of the community college systems of Chicago and St. Louis. These systems serve a great many people and seem attributable to unusual leadership. They are not typical of the region; of all moderately large metropolitan areas in the country without any free-access colleges, more than half are located in the Midwest.

It should be recognized that many state universities have nonselective colleges or divisions. Also, a number of public institutions are officially open to any high school graduate in the state but enroll most of their students from the upper half of the high school class. Both of these circumstances may be more common in the Midwest than in other regions. In neither case are such institutions classified here as free-access because the definition depends not upon whether some less apt students are admitted, but whether the total institution is likely to be regarded by prospective students as truly accessible. The best generally available measure of that accessibility would seem to be the proportion of lower half high school graduates actually on the campus.

The situation in the South is interesting for several reasons. Despite very limited resources and a decentralized population, the

region has managed to place free-access colleges within almost as large a proportion of its people as is true in the wealthier and more centralized West. This has come about through the use of widely different models. The comprehensive junior colleges of Florida, the technical education centers of South Carolina, the open-door senior institutions of Louisiana, and the university two-year system of Kentucky are good examples of this diversity.

Concerning the accessibility of higher education, the Southern region has two large problems--too well-known to belabor and too critical to dismiss. Racial segregation of institutions will necessarily hinder educational opportunity as long as it drains attention and resources from the development of relevant educational opportunity for high school graduates. And it is the limited resources and opportunities that constitute a second difficult problem. In spite of considerable progress in making higher education available to their youth, some Southern states still have a very low rate of college attendance.

Roughly half of the population in the Western United States lives near an accessible institution. This proportion is somehow lower than one might have expected, but it is important to recognize one other important characteristic of the West. Individual free-access colleges in this region are highly developed. They typically offer comprehensive programs, provide an array of community services, and attract large numbers of students. In this sense free-access higher education is particularly well developed in the West as compared to the Northeast. The extent of geographic variation is indicated by the percent-

age of new freshmen in each region who are enrolled in a free-access college: Northeast, 22%; Midwest, 34%; South, 50%; and West, 71%.

Organization and Opportunity

The nature and extent of interstate variations in accessibility are particularly important because this is the level at which public higher education is usually organized. To put it more explicitly, this is increasingly where broad policy is established concerning the type, location, and access characteristics of institutions. Considering that the general objectives of most states would presumably be fairly similar, there are remarkable differences in the scope of free-access higher education from state to state. This section comments upon the organizational character of those variations as they relate to the major issues outlined earlier.

The extent to which the population is covered by free-access colleges in individual states varies from 0 to 80 percent. In some states the accessible colleges are quite well situated in relation to the population; in others, where people live seems hardly to be a factor in the location of free-access colleges. What type of institution serves the free-access function also varies a great deal across states. In some states free-access colleges are coordinated through a detailed plan; in some organization is almost nonexistent. Finally, the states vary considerably with respect to the major problems they face in extending educational opportunity.[3]

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[3]As one would expect there has been considerable progress in the development of free-access higher education over the past decade. A

Since attempts at statewide planning for educational opportunity are mostly rather new, it is improper to speak of state models of organization in any strict sense. There are, however, styles and approaches which characterize some states more than others. The four types of organization described below are concerned with the public sector because public institutions are subject to such organization, and they bear the public responsibility for educational opportunity beyond high school. In many states private colleges are included in state planning and coordination on a voluntary basis; obviously, the educational functions they serve in a state often have a pronounced effect upon allocation of state resources to public institutions.

Differentiated Organization

A differentiated form of state organization implies several types of institutions within a state, usually with little coordination among them. There are at least a dozen states which can be so characterized. They vary widely in the extent to which they provide accessible higher education. Examples include Wisconsin with its mixture of systems, Alabama with its numerous but somewhat uncoordinated junior colleges, and South Carolina with its extensive but partly unrecognized system of technical institutes.

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detailed study nearing completion by Richard I. Ferrin of the College Board's Access Research Office indicates that the number of Americans living near a free-access college more than doubled between 1958 and 1968, but that half of that increase was erroded by other factors, principally increasing selectivity of state colleges. A particularly valuable aspect of this study is the documentation it provides concerning the marked improvement in some states which have purposefully organized their systems of higher education to expand educational opportunity.

While we are witnessing a marked increase in statewide coordination generally, this does not necessarily mean that fewer states will have a differentiated form of organization. It seems likely that some states will develop different parallel systems only loosely connected with one another. The recent extensive development of postsecondary vocational education outside the framework of higher education is the best current example (Swanson, 1968). This form of differentiation bears unfortunate resemblance to tracking in secondary schools.

A primary advantage of the differentiated form of higher education is the freedom it allows different types of institutions to develop their own strengths, without the in-fighting and status problems which can result when one institution serves multiple functions. Some major disadvantages affecting educational opportunity include inadequate local program alternatives for the student, difficulty in the development of coordinated guidance systems, and lack of flexibility in transferring among types of institutions. In some areas there is increasing social pressure against attending second class (different) institutions. This may inhibit intentional development of specialized parallel systems.

This differentiated form of organization seems likely to spring up in a vacuum--either an interest vacuum or a power vacuum. There have been numerous examples of the former when new types of institutions have developed out of societal pressure and the indifference of existing colleges. Educational opportunity is extended over the short term but educational Balkanization may be the long term result.

The power vacuum may be developing in some states where the statewide coordinating body lacks sufficient legal sanction to insure adequate coordination among parallel systems. For example, serious transfer problems in California suggest that that state has some of the symptioms if not the disease (San Francisco Chronicle, 1969).

Homogeneous Organization

A homogeneous form of state organization characterizes some 8 to 10 states in which there is relatively little differentiation or coordination among institutions. In a sense we are dealing with a state of affairs as much as a model. In these states the diversified senior institution is the predominant type of college. They may be largely free-access as the state colleges of Arkansas, or moderately selective as the public institutions of South Dakota. Indiana illustrates an important variation of this type of organization--the extension of senior institutions by means of branches. This represents an organized effort to extend opportunity through minimizing geographical barriers, but the access characteristics and programs of the branches are otherwise similar to those of the parent institution. A noteworthy finding was that most branches throughout the country were not free-access; we shall come to an important exception.

This homogeneous form of organization may ultimately encourage each institution to serve a broad range of scholastic and societal functions. But this would be an extremely costly development and there is some doubt that present undifferentiated senior institutions and their branches are likely to expand educational opportu-

nity in the immediate future to the extent that other models can. In most of these states the colleges typically admit upper-half students, and there are relatively few free-access institutions. Furthermore, this model gives limited attention to students not interested in traditional higher education.

Hierarchical Organization

Without doubt the wave of the 1960's has been the California model. This hierarchical form of organization has three basic characteristics which bear upon educational opportunity. First, it is a differentiated multi-level system. Its community college base has a societal orientation with respect to access and programs. Its university top layer has a pronounced scholastic orientation. Second, there is a commitment to provide ready geographic access at low cost to as large a proportion of the population as possible. Third, the overall system is coordinated with respect to objectives, programs, transfer among units, etc.

Some 15 states have incorporated this general form of organization; an additional 10 or so are moving in this direction. Since a model is not easily imposed upon existing institutions, there are naturally many compromises and variations on the hierarchical form. Also, there are a number of conscious variations. One of the most important with respect to educational opportunity is the upper division institution which receives all of its students as transfers from two-year colleges. This Florida experiment is being repeated in Illinois; both states are prominent in the development of the hierarchical model.

In its full expression the model is designed to integrate the societal and scholastic functions of higher education. For that reason it has highly significant built-in strengths--so many strengths in fact that it becomes particularly important to recognize its weaknesses. The community colleges have experienced serious difficulty in creating genuine opportunity for fulfillment of diverse interests and talents. This problem is evident in low enrollment in career programs and high attrition generally (Florida Research Council, 1969; Coordinating Council for Higher Education, 1969). Inadequate space for transfer students in senior institutions has become very serious in some areas and is likely to become more so (Willingham and Findikyan, 1969). And the model has yet to develop fully the community ties necessary to insure reliable financial support, provide extensive work-study relationships, and generate truly diverse institutions.

It seems inevitable that variations of the hierarchical model will continue to characterize emerging state plans. It is regretable that part of this movement is due to the wrong reason--a not uncommon assumption that the community college is an inexpensive way to buy off large responsibilites. In truth the community college probably represents a farsighted wedding of ideology and practicality in the progressive move to a greatly improved but far more expensive form of community higher education.

Integrated Organization

A final form of state organization closely related to the hierarchical model is the integrated system found in only three states--

Alaska, Hawaii, and Kentucky (New York is a doubtful fourth.). The important feature is the fact that comprehensive community colleges are organized as branches of the state university. This form of organization furthers societal objectives in a system which places priority upon governance, control, and integration of resources. But it may give up a good measure of initiative and diversity which local autonomy implies.

This model is important because it represents a ready organizational alternative to the hierarchical plan. And it is an alternative which may be seized in response to social pressure on admission policy. For example, the City University of New York has developed what is probably the nation's most comprehensive master plan for urban education (Board of Higher Education, CUNY, 1968). Its recent policy adjustments seem to have moved from a hierarchical toward an integrated model. This type of model also bears watching because it has the potential for improving upon the hierarchical plan or, in some states, perhaps moving in the other direction to a more orthodox system of university branches emphasizing scholastic functions.

A Final Impression

From a societal viewpoint the matter of educational opportunity is for many students a question of:

- whether there is a local college
- whether it is accessible
- whether it has relevant programs
- whether its programs lead to educational-vocational opportunities

With respect to the latter two points, there is ample reason for doubt and concern but inadequate facts. Concerning the first two points

there is direct evidence of substantial deficiencies in accessible higher education throughout the country, serious inequities among cities and states, and harmful lack of coordinated planning in many states. These are basically problems of organization and resource development at the system, state, and national level. The job, for state planning bodies in particular, is to:

- collect systematic information in order to monitor access, inform the public, plan programs, and justify expenditures
- coordinate programs in order to broaden opportunity, reduce undesirable overlap, and insure educational relevance and continuity
- provide the forum and the leadership which will further social, fiscal, and educational responsibility in the public interest

We have referred to the state's legal responsibilities regarding educational opportunity. There seems little doubt that states have vastly greater social and educational responsibilites than they have yet accepted. With mounting costs and public involvement, it seems inevitable that there will be tremendous pressure to further organize the coordination and planning of higher education at the state level. Hopefully, there will be new models with improved characteristics and constructive alternatives to present limited forms of organization.

Many bridle at the whole message, feeling that the emphasis on societal objectives is doing great damage to higher education. This seems very likely true when such objectives are channeled into campus radicalism, precipitous reconstitution, and academic anti-intellectualism. It seems very doubtful, however, that there is any turn-

ing back from constructive movement toward expanded societal goals and greater efforts to serve larger numbers of youth and adults. A major problem is to enlist all available interest and talent in promoting societal objectives in ways which will preserve scholastic strengths.

During the sixties the country became committed to mass higher education. The seventies seem likely to be a critical period when second generation state planning and coordination will take hold and become entrenched in most states. It is hard to overstate the importance of this institutionalization of state organization. It is critical that it proceed in ways which will serve social ends but avoid bureaucratization, the stifling of institutional initiative, or constriction of individual choice. We seem certain to live with tension and compromise. In order to extend educational opportunity, it is vital that statewide planning work--but not too well.

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